



VOLUNTEER LOUISIANA COMMUNICATIONS TOOL KIT

Volunteer Louisiana is the State Service Commission for Louisiana. With funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service and the State, Volunteer Louisiana oversees the AmeriCorps State programs, promotes volunteerism, and coordinates spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers in times of disaster.

This tool kit has been provided to help Louisiana AmeriCorps State programs promote their programs and members, and spread the message about national service in Louisiana.

SECTION I: PROMOTING VOLUNTEER LOUISIANA AND AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

Volunteer Louisiana, established in 1993 under the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, manages AmeriCorps State programs, promotes volunteerism, and coordinates spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers in times of disaster.

Volunteer Louisiana Mission: To help meet the needs of Louisiana's citizens through volunteerism and national service.

FUN FACTS

Volunteer Louisiana AmeriCorps State programs will engage around 1,000 members through 17 programs serving 29 parishes in 2018-2019.

AmeriCorps State programs currently address key priorities of Education, Capacity Building, Healthy Futures, Environmental Stewardship, and Economic Opportunity.

Throughout Louisiana, there are over 5,000 state and national AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members serving over 600 sites annually.

Press Release boiler plate language for Volunteer Louisiana:

2018 marks the 25th Anniversary of Volunteer Louisiana, the State Service Commission. Volunteer Louisiana manages 17 AmeriCorps State programs, promotes volunteerism, and coordinates spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers in times of disaster. It is supported by grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service and is housed in Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

Press Release boiler plate language for The Corporation for National and Community Service:
AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency for volunteering, service, and civic engagement. The agency engages millions of Americans in citizen service through its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs and leads the nation's volunteering and service efforts. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

BRANDING

- Prominently display the AmeriCorps logo and Volunteer Louisiana logo on your website. Preferred location is on your home page or in your “About Us” section.
- Logos should not be changed or altered. AmeriCorps is a registered service mark of CNCS.
- Make sure your members are wearing the AmeriCorps “A” logo when they are serving.
- Place signs at your program sites that feature the AmeriCorps logo. You can order materials at <https://pubs.nationalservice.gov/>, <http://www.nationalservicegear.org/>, and <https://gooddeed.org/ameriCorps.aspx>.
- For AmeriCorps logos and additional guidance on the AmeriCorps Logo use, visit: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/outreach-resources/logos>.



ELEVATOR SPEECH

All AmeriCorps members should be prepared to give a brief “elevator speech” about their service and work in the community. Below are some guidelines and examples for creating a personal elevator speech.

Elevator speech should include:

- Member’s Name
- Member’s Organization
- State they are an AmeriCorps member
- What the member’s Organization does
- What the member specifically does
- Ask the person to visit website

Examples:

- *I am John Deaux, an AmeriCorps member serving with the Boys & Girls Club. My organization provides after school and summertime education-based activities, and I serve as a mentor to elementary and middle school students in our community.*
- *I am Jane Deaux, an AmeriCorps member serving with Serve Louisiana. My organization partners with nonprofits and faith-based organizations to create healthy communities. I serve as a volunteer coordinator for a campus-based food pantry.*

SOCIAL MEDIA

Volunteer Louisiana accounts – *FOLLOW* and *TAG!*



@VolunteerLA



@Volunteer_la



@Volunteer_la



Volunteer Louisiana

Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) accounts:



@AmeriCorps,@NationalService



@AmeriCorps,@NationalService



@NationalService



NationalService.Tumblr.com



NationalService



NationalService

#GetThingsDone: CNCS hashtag – use it for national visibility when posting about service and your members.

Photo/Video Tips:

- Use photos and videos of members as often as possible and **tag Volunteer Louisiana!**
- Take **action pictures** of members doing service work, mentoring students, planting gardens, repairing homes, etc...
- When taking photos with a smart phone, turn your phone **horizontally** to get the best range for your picture.
- Capture high resolution pictures that are well lit and include the **AmeriCorps logo** and **program branding**.
- Make sure you use a photo release and check on any **photo restrictions** with the populations you serve.
- **Send pictures to Volunteer Louisiana** for posting on our website and social media as well!

2018-2019 KEY DATES

- September 11 - National Day of Service and Remembrance
- October 27 – Make a Difference Day
- November 17 – Family Volunteer Day
- January 21 – MLK Day of Service
- March, TBD – AmeriCorps Week
- April, TBD – National Service Recognition Day
- April 7-13 – National Volunteer Week
- April 12-14 – Global Youth Service Day

<http://www.volunteerloisiana.gov/national-days-service>



SECTION II: ENGAGING ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

ENGAGEMENT

Engage local and national elected officials as well as local stakeholders in your program activities to help educate and spread the word about national service in Louisiana.

You can invite officials to:

- **Special Days/Holidays:** such as AmeriCorps Week, MLK Day of Service, Member Graduations, etc...
- **Swearing-In Ceremonies:** ask an elected official or VIP to administer the AmeriCorps pledge
- Or request a **local Proclamation:** Contact your Mayor's office to have a Proclamation for national service programs on special days like the National Service Recognition Day

Some tips for engaging elected officials:

- Make initial **phone contact** and send a **formal invitation letter**; with a timeframe for when you would like the visit (i.e. for the 1st week of August)
- Talk to the **scheduler directly** to nail down the date and **be persistent!** The Official may not be available when you are requesting the visit, so please accept the attendance of a staff member in their place. Staff members "have the ear" of the Official and this helps build rapport and make a connection with the Official's home office.
- **Be flexible** with timing for the visit: have several days and times available as options. Keep the meeting/presentation short, sweet, and to the point. Also be prepared to only host the official or staff member for an hour since their schedules are extremely busy.
- Send out a **press release** and/or **media advisory**: coordinate this first with the Official's office, since they will have their own media channels. Additional media and press will help further promote your program and the national service message!

For the Visit:

- Have the Official participate in an activity
- Tell personal and impactful stories of the work members do
- Make sure branding is visible
- Create talking points for members so everyone is sharing the same message
- Remember to take pictures, post on Social Media, and Tag!

- **Educate** your audience on national service and what your program is doing to make a difference in your community. **Follow up** and stay in contact with the Elected Official's office to stay on their radar and build a relationship with the office. Remember **do not "make an ask"**, such as asking for support or vote on a specific bill and/or initiatives – that crosses the line into lobbying.



VOLUNTEER LOUISIANA

United States Senators:

US Senator Bill Cassidy

<https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/contact/office-locations>

US Senator John Kennedy

<https://www.kennedy.senate.gov/public/office-information>

United States Representatives: (<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/FindMyLegislators.aspx>)

Rep Steve Scalise

<https://scalise.house.gov/our-district>

Rep Clay Higgins

<https://clayhiggins.house.gov/>

Rep Ralph Abraham

<https://abraham.house.gov/>

Rep Cedric Richmond

<https://richmond.house.gov/>

Rep Mike Johnson

<https://mikejohnson.house.gov/>

Rep Garret Graves

<https://garretgraves.house.gov/>

SECTION III: LAGNIAPPE

Free Graphic Design Programs: Canva.com & Spark.adobe.com

Give awards to your members! Volunteer Louisiana offers the **Louisiana Volunteer Service Certificate and Awards** for individuals or groups. Volunteer Louisiana also has the annual Champions of Service Awards for individuals, groups, AmeriCorps, and Senior Corps members making a difference throughout the state.

For more on communications and branding from CNCS, download the CNCS Communications Guide: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2018/grantee-communications-toolkit>. This guide includes boilerplate language, social media templates, and more links to information through CNCS.

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